the revolution. The results of the election failed to dispel my doubts. The Cadets obtained a great majority in St. Petersburg, but the voting was light. There was no way of telling whether the absentees had boycotted the Duma or stayed home for lack of interest in politics itself.

The peasants remained the greatest enigma of the electoral campaign. They took the nomination of electors to county conventions very seriously, often nominating them after public prayer and giving them detailed instructions. These "mandates" dealt chiefly with local problems: to ask the government to repair a bridge or build a flour mill; to demand the removal of a gendarme sergeant; to cut the rent, to transfer ownership of the forest of an absentee landlord to the community, and the like. The political composition of the peasant electors was not clear. Most of them refused to discuss politics with newspaper reporters, and up to the day when the Duma convened on April 27 nobody knew how the villages had voted.

By the end of the campaign I was thoroughly fed up with it and felt an increasing urge to go back to my books, to learn more about history, public finance, constitutional problems, land reform. I felt I needed years and years to fill the gaps in my knowledge. Then suddenly an insignificant event gave a new direction to my thinking.

BREAD AND WORK!

I was in the students' canteen with a briefcase full of books from the University library when Eugene took the empty chair at my table. "I need your help, Sergei," he said. He told me he was in touch with a group of unemployed workers who had decided to demand bread and work from the Municipal Council, and he asked me to draft a petition for them. My first draft was disappointing. I tried again, with no more success. "To write for other people," I said to Eugene, "I must feel what they feel."

The next morning I went with him to one of the emergency hot-meal stations for the unemployed organized by the Union of Engineers. Despite the early hour, people were idling in the dining room. Most of them were middle-aged or elderly men. I asked Eugene's friends, "What would you say to the Municipal Council if you were called to testify before it?"

They replied briefly, each in his own way. I put further questions. Then we went to other stations. In the evening, writing the petition, I was able to identify myself with the men whose feelings I was trying to express. The next day the delegates from twenty-four stations assembled in one of the dining rooms. Seated around a long